

The Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800

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One of the *leitmotifs* in Alexander Kazhdan's multifaceted *oeuvre* is a message that by now most of us have made our own: during the lifespan of Byzantine civilization, significant changes were occurring behind an apparently uniform facade. There existed, as it were, several Byzantine civilizations at different times. In the offering which, after some years of rumination, I am presenting to the master of our studies and an old friend, I wish to provide a *pendant* to his message: my story will be straightforward, but it also will remind us that at any given time there coexisted, as it were, several manifestations of the same Byzantine civilization.

I

If one were to ask the average Byzantinist to name the monuments of Byzantine art that can be dated to around 800, give or take a quarter of a century, the answer would probably be parts of St. Irene in Constantinople and St. Sophia in Thessalonica; a stage in the mosaic decoration of the Dormition Church of Nicaea (assuming that he had seen photographs taken before 1922); the remains of Theophanes the Confessor's church at his monastery of Megas Agros; the ivory (probably a scepter) with the likeness of one of the emperors Leo—which one would depend on which recent article he might have read;¹ and the miniatures of the Vatican Ptolemy (Vat. gr. 1291), redated to the 830s a dozen years ago, but in my opinion more

than fifty years earlier in date.² Even if he were versed in art history, our average Byzantinist would not be able to quote many more monuments that clearly belong to those years.

If, on the other hand, we were to ask the average Byzantine art historian to name Byzantine historical writings of the same period, he would be able to come up with a longer list of fairly well-dated items: the Chronicle going under the name of Theophanes, the two historical treatises and the various defenses of images by Patriarch Nikephoros, perhaps the Chronicle of Synkellos, and the *Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio* with another related fragment on the Byzantine debacle of 811, and, for professional reasons, the curious treatise on Constantinople's monumental past, the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, provided he had not accepted the recent proposal to date this treatise to the early eighth century. With the help of reference works he could add more examples. The disparity in the length of these two lists is rooted in the nature of the evidence and not in the respective levels of erudition possessed by the two specialists. Our evidence for history that was written about 800 is simply more plentiful than our evi-

¹Cf., on the one hand, K. Weitzmann, "Ivory Sculpture of the Macedonian Renaissance," in *Kolloquium über spätantike und frühmittelalterliche Skulptur*, ed. V. Milošević (Mainz, 1970), II (1971), 10–11, repr. in Weitzmann's *Classical Heritage in Byzantine and Near Eastern Art* (London, 1981), nr. IX, 10–11 and annotation to p. 10 note 61 (Leo V); and, on the other, K. Corrigan, "The Ivory Scepter of Leo VI: A Statement of Post-Iconoclastic Imperial Ideology," *ArtB* 60 (1978), 407–416; A. Schminck, "Rota tu volubilis," in *Cupido Legum*, ed. L. Burgmann et al., *Festschrift Simon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), esp.

231 and note 139 (Schminck is too hard on Weitzmann); C. Jolivet-Levy, (a) "L'image du pouvoir dans l'art byzantin à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne (867–1056)," *Byzantion* 57 (1987), 446–47 and (b) the Russian version of the article in *VizVrem* 49 (1988), 146 and note 20 (all three authors favor Leo VI). Without insisting, I am inclined to attribute the "Leo" ivory to Leo V, because the lettering of its long inscription seems to be earlier than the end of the 9th century.

²For the dating to the 830s, cf. I. Spatharakis, "Some Observations on the Ptolemy Ms. Vat. gr. 1291: Its Date and the Two Initial Miniatures," *BZ* 71 (1978), 41–49. My proposal for an earlier dating was based on the observation that a change in script occurred in the list of emperors on fol. 17r, after the name of Constantine (V). This would point to the years 741–775 as the date of the Vat. gr. 1291. This proposal was developed by D. H. Wright, "The Date of the Vatican Illuminated Handy Tables of Ptolemy and of its Early Additions," *BZ* 78 (1985), 355–62, cf. esp. pp. 355–56.

dence for art that was produced at the same time. This observation alone entitles us to ask whether interest in history increased around 800.

II

We modern historians of Byzantium are predominantly interested in works or parts of works whose authors deal with events contemporary with or close to the time in which they are writing. To remain within our period, Theophanes, for example, as we know with a fair degree of certainty, wrote or inserted material from elsewhere into the final pages of his *Chronicle* between 813 and late 814, so we are most interested in what he has to tell us about the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries. It is more difficult to say when Patriarch Nikephoros wrote. I feel, without being able to prove it, that he was rewriting and stylistically improving his main historical work, the *Breviarium*, late in life. Far better judges than I, however, believe that Nikephoros wrote the first version of the *Breviarium* early in his career; it follows that he could have rewritten it early as well. In any case, he certainly wrote before 829; so again, we appreciate him for what he has to say about the seventh and eighth centuries. The *Scriptor Incertus* wrote after 820, I think not too long after that date,³ and his closeness to the events that he so vividly describes makes him a particularly treasured source.

³One of those far better judges is C. Mango, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History* (Washington, D.C., 1990), esp. 12, 27, 29: the *Breviarium* is an *oeuvre de jeunesse* of ca. 780, and its reworking, by Nikephoros himself or a learned editor, occurred at an indeterminate date. Speck, "Das geteilte Dossier" (as in note 47 below), 514–15 dates the first version of the *Breviarium* to the late 80s or early 90s, and the end of the work at stylistic improvements to 792 rather than 797. He gives no reasons.—Date of the *Scriptor Incertus*: cf., on the one hand, *Scriptor Incertus*, 346, 9–10 and 355, 1–2, Bonn ed. = 55, 159–63 and 64, 404–6, ed. Iadevaia, on whom cf. note 28 below (Leo V wished to live or rule for many years, as many as Leo III did. This implies that reality turned out to be different and that the author wrote after 820); cf., on the other, 350, 21–351, 10, Bonn ed. = 60, 289–61, 303, ed. Iadevaia (no awareness that Anthony was to become patriarch, which happened in ca. 821). I am not adducing *ἐπισκόπους καὶ μοναχοὺς ἀνεκαλέσατο* of 362, 20–21, Bonn ed. = 72, 608–9, ed. Iadevaia here, for it is not at all sure that these last four words of our preserved text refer to Michael II and thus to a date after 820. On the latter point, cf. e.g., R. Browning in *Byzantion* 35 (1965), 405. C. Mango, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983), 400 and note 21 cautiously dates the *Scriptor* before 850 and offers valid reasons for rejecting a date "after 864," originally suggested by Lidia Tomić in *ZRVI* 1 (1952), 81. W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival 780–842* (Stanford, 1988), 378 does not make it clear according to whose "plausible conjecture" the full text of *Scriptor Incertus* was used for (i.e., must have encompassed) events between 753

Writers and readers of history around 800 had, like their predecessors of the fourth to seventh centuries, a different perspective. Byzantine historians were Christians; they believed in a big plan of history. To defend and expound this plan, they relied on a body of doctrinal writing and on commentaries on that body provided by the church fathers. They owed both their strength and their difficulties to this belief and to this reliance. Their strength—not unlike the strength of some ideologues of yesterday—came from knowing revealed truths and from being able to think of, and attempt to draw, a vast historical panorama that extended from the Creation through the Incarnation to the Day Without End. On the other hand, their difficulties, which we perceive more clearly than they did, came from two sources: from having to relate the flow of historical events to some immutable point, such as the Creation or the date of Christ's Passion, and from having to write history according to a set of data contained in the Old and New Testaments.

One of the tasks of the historian, especially a universal historian, is to establish his and his readers' position in time and space by referring to fixed points. Today, when our Christian Europocentricity has imposed the Christian era upon much of the globe, this task is perceived as trivial; today we also realize that it is applied to an insignificant segment in the life of mankind and an infinitesimal fraction—only the last seven thousand years or so—of the earth's existence; but around the year 800 the task presented much greater technical difficulties and was felt to be of primary importance to perform. The fixed points were to be provided by the Bible, and since humanity was held to be almost exactly as old as the world itself, the starting point of all history was to be the Creation.

The task of constructing an extensive and all-embracing chronological framework that would organize all the fixed points provided by the Bible was undertaken for the second and last time in the history of the Byzantine East around the year 808. It was accomplished by George Synkellos who

and 825. Treadgold's own conjecture (pp. 378 and 388) attributes the authorship of the *Scriptor Incertus* to Sergios Confessor. Much is possible in the game of attributions, but this one assumes an embarrassingly low level of literary sophistication for the putative father of Patriarch Photios; and the stylistic judgment in codex 67 of Photios' *Bibliotheca*—our only source for Sergios—does not bear out such an assumption. Whoever the author of the *Scriptor Incertus* may have been, according to codex 67 Sergios wrote in or soon after 828.

wrote his Chronicle, or at least parts of it, in Constantinople. His death occurred in or shortly before 813, and he seems to have been working on the draft of his "Selected Chronography" as late as 810 or even later.⁴ Aside from the monumental work of Eusebius of Caesarea—who is only barely a Byzantine author—Synkellos' chronological undertaking was on a scale and of a precision never attempted in the history of Byzantine scholarship. To be sure, Synkellos reverentially quotes Pano-doros and Annianos, his learned Alexandrian predecessors who wrote about the year 400, but we know nothing about their work outside of his own text. Of the other counterexamples that come to mind, the Paschal Chronicle lacks Synkellos' universal scope, and neither the shadowy Universal History of Hesychios of Miletus (that went down to the year 518) nor the even more shadowy and low-brow Chronicle of Hippolytus of Thebes (seventh-eighth centuries?)⁵ can compare—as far as evidence allows us to judge it—with Synkellos' effort. I know of no better thumbnail sketch of Synkellos' achievement than that given by Theophanes in the preface to the chronicle that bears his name. Theophanes writes:

Father George of blessed memory who at one time was synkellos of Tarasios, the great patriarch of Constantinople, was a man of repute and exceedingly great learning. He read many chroniclers and historians and investigated them thoroughly. Thereupon he composed in a precise manner a short chronicle from Adam until Diocletian, emperor of the Romans and persecutor of the Christians. After painstaking research he established dates, reconciled discrepancies among them and corrected them and put them all together as no one had done before him. He wrote up the reigns of all nations and their dates. He also recorded, to the extent of his capabilities, the arch-priests of the great ecumenical sees—I have in mind Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem—in precise order, including those shepherds of the church who led their flocks in an orthodox manner as well as those who ruled in heresy like unto robbers.⁶

⁴Cf. Synkellos, *Chron.*, 4, 11, Bonn ed. = 4, 29, ed. Mosshammer ("802 years" elapsed from Christ's birth) and 389, 19–20, Bonn ed. = 244, 31, ed. Mosshammer ("the present year 6302.") For Synkellos, as for his predecessors Sextus Iulius Africanus and Annianos, the year of Creation was 5500 before Christ's birth. For the hypothesis that Synkellos may have been writing as late as 813, cf. Mango, "Who Wrote . . ." (as in note 20 below), 14.

⁵On Pano-doros, cf. O. Seel in *RE* 18 (1949), 632–35. On Hippolytus of Thebes, cf. Fr. Diekamp, *Hippolytos von Theben, Texte und Untersuchungen* (Münster i. W., 1898), esp. pp. 1–55, 157 and 159–62; cf. also Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople* (as in note 30 below), esp. p. 41.

⁶Theophanes, *Chron.* 3, 9–23, ed. de Boor.

It was hardly correct of Theophanes to describe Synkellos' work as a "short chronicle." It is among the major endeavors of Byzantine historiography, amounting as it does in the latest edition to close to five hundred pages of the Teubner text; but Theophanes was perfectly right when he said that Synkellos had read many chroniclers and historians. Synkellos is not only one of our sources for reconstructing the Chronicle of Eusebius, on whom he depends, for the writings of Sextus Iulius Africanus, Eusebius' famous predecessor of the third century, as well as for the fragments of several Hellenistic writers, but is also the valuable parallel source for the Book of Henoch and the chief repository for the fragments of the Greek version of the Jewish apocryphal Old Testament book of the Jubilees, which he called the "small"—or perhaps "detailed"—"Genesis" (λεπτὴ Γένεσις). In the latest editions of these Greek fragments quotations from Synkellos are given the lion's share. Moreover, Synkellos mentions and discusses at some length what he calls the Handy Tables of Ptolemy, probably a text close to or identical with the one contained in the Vatican manuscript that I would like to date to the second half of the eighth century.⁷

Theophanes was also on the right track when he spoke of Synkellos' painstaking research. When it came to deciding on details *within* the theoretical framework that he had established, Synkellos behaved like a modern scholar. He weighed the testimony of sources against each other and compared texts. True, it is often difficult to distinguish between what comes from him and what comes from his sources when the latter are no longer at our disposal. With the passage I am about to adduce we seem to be on safe ground, however, because it is prefaced by the sentence, "According to the present chronicle." The passage runs as follows:

Noah being five hundred years of age gave birth to Sem. Year of the world 2142. One hundred years later, when Noah was six hundred years old, the flood

⁷Cf. *Apocalypsis Henochi graece*, ed. M. Black, *Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca*, ed. A.-M. Denis, *Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti graece*, 3 (Leiden, 1970), 10; 21–26; 29–30; 37; 70–100. Cf. also *The Book of Jubilees, a Critical Text*, ed. and transl. (from the Ethiopian) J. C. Vanderkam, CSCO 510, *Scriptores Aethiopici*, 87 (Louvain, 1989), xi–xii; 258–61 (takes over Denis with some additions). In general, cf. A.-M. Denis, *Introduction aux pseudépigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament* (Leiden, 1970), 150, 152–53, 160. For the term λεπτὴ Γένεσις, that already occurs in the *Decretum Gelasianum*, cf. Synkellos, *Chron.*, 5, 16; 7, 11; 13, 16; 14, 5, Bonn ed. = 3, 16–17; 4, 21; 7, 28; 8, 2, ed. Mosshammer. For the Handy Tables of "Ptol-

occurred [this is one of the pivotal points in the scheme of history]. Thus from Adam until the flood there were 2242 years. This is what is contained in Eusebius [Synkellos' usual guide] and is the truth; and it is so in most of the copies of the Pentateuch according to the edition of the Seventy. As for Africanus [the other scholar with whom Synkellos dealt], he computed 2262 years, basing himself on a few copies which contain this information, but which are not trustworthy. Now for the first time span down to the flood, there is a difference of 349 years . . . between the Hebrew copies and the very old Samaritan copy written in different characters, which the Hebrews agree is both trustworthy and earlier. The difference between the edition of the Seventy and the Hebrew text is 586 years; and that between the Seventy and the Samaritan text, 935 years [Synkellos added 349 to 586]. Africanus differs from Eusebius by 20 years for the length of the period between Adam and the flood.⁸

The last sentence must come from Synkellos, because Synkellos upbraids Africanus for this "error" in numerous passages of his book. Nothing about Synkellos' knowledge of foreign languages should be inferred from the passage just quoted, but the conclusion is warranted that Synkellos was aware of scholarly disputes held in Palestine or at least about texts known in Palestine. There will be a word about this later (p. 289 and note 29).

Synkellos both believed in the regularity of the historical process and found the laws of this process expounded in the Scriptures. From this came his (and his predecessors') need for establishing chronological symmetries. Thus the world was created on 25 March, the Flood ended on 25 March, our Lord was conceived on 25 March and was crucified on Friday 25 March (25 March being the date of Passover in Synkellos' year of crucifixion). Finally, the first day of the year was 25 March. From this also came Synkellos' need to reject any data found in secular sources that clashed with "the theory." Thus Berossos and Manetho, Hellenistic writers who dealt with Babylonia and Egypt

respectively, quite reasonably assumed that Babylonia and Egypt had been inhabited for more than a hundred thousand years. This, however, could not be true, given the fact that the whole world—Egypt, Babylonia, and all—was created 5,500 years before the birth of Christ. Therefore Synkellos proceeded to prove that both Egypt and Babylonia were uninhabited until the flood and that they were peopled only after that cataclysmic event. In such a way Berossos' and Manetho's one hundred thousand years of Babylonian and Egyptian history were eliminated. Moreover, in the wake of Jewish and early Christian apologists Synkellos also had to defend the originality of Jewish teachings and their temporal priority to those of the pagans. Therefore he asserted that Berossos had stolen some elements of the story of the Creation from Moses, and dated Moses (with Eusebius' help) earlier than such important figures of Greek mythical history as Prometheus, Europa, Perseus, and Hercules, and certainly Homer and Hesiod. As a matter of fact, even if Moses was not 850 years older than the Trojan wars, he preceded them by 350 years.⁹ Whatever the much-researched sources of this chronology may have been, Synkellos made it his own and relied on this construction in defending the story of the Scriptures against what non-Christians offered as a different set of facts.

For all his scholarship, Synkellos was not much read until quite recently. If a Byzantinist of our time could conduct an interview with him, Synkellos would no doubt have expressed resentment at this neglect, and complained, *exempli gratia*, as follows: "I was somebody in my time. I was no less a scholar than you people are. I reconciled Eusebius and Africanus. I have gathered a great deal of material. Within about half a century of my death, I was translated in excerpts into Latin by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, a man who nearly became a pope. What is more, I was rediscovered by the two brightest classical stars of the star-studded sixteenth century: Joseph Justus Scaliger obtained, after much effort, a Paris manuscript of my work, and used it—too extensively, I must admit, and without showing me due respect—in his epoch-

emy," cf. *ibid.*, 97, 2–10 = 57, 17–24 ed. Mosshammer.—Calling Synkellos' work a "short chronicle" (σύντομον χρονογραφίαν) may have been Theophanes' unfelicitous attempt at paraphrasing that work's title, "Select Chronography" (Ἐκλογή χρονογραφίας).

⁸Synkellos, *Chron.*, 156, 8–20, Bonn ed. = 94, 2–13, ed. Mosshammer. Cf. also 152, 1, Bonn ed. = 91, 12, ed. Mosshammer and 382, 7–14, Bonn ed. = 240, 12–18, ed. Mosshammer, where our author refers to a manuscript he obtained from the library at Caesarea of Cappadocia, a manuscript that derived from a copy corrected by Basil the Great himself. In general, we now tend to attribute more originality and independence of judgment to Synkellos than earlier scholars did. Cf. Laqueur (as in note 11 below), col. 1407.

⁹Chronological symmetries: Synkellos, *Chron.*, 1, 5–2, 1; 2, 4–18; 41, 15–19; Berossos' and Manetho's falsehoods and plagiarism: 25, 2–26, 2; 27, 12–29, 5; 30, 4–11; 42, 4–6; 56, 15–57, 14; 67, 17–68, 14; Moses' chronology: 120, 15–124, 8, Bonn ed. = 1, 11–13; 1, 16–28; 23, 26–28; 14, 22–15, 6; 16, 2–31; 17, 14–19; 23, 33–35; 32, 14–31; 38, 12–29; 72, 15–74, 20, ed. Mosshammer. *Ad rem*, cf. also Adler, *Time Immemorial* (as in note 11 below), 138–45.

making *Thesaurus Temporum* to reconstruct the first book of Eusebius' lost *Chronicle*, and Isaac Casaubon took notes on what I had to say on Babylonian history. Even today I am represented by a dozen Greek manuscripts, not counting the excerpts, by at least three manuscripts of the Latin translation, and by one manuscript of a Slavic translation of a version of my work, by three copies of that manuscript, and by two excerpts from it.¹⁰ Why is it that Malalas, whose culture, let alone scholarship, I do not wish to discuss because I am a saintly man, and who in essence is represented by a single Greek manuscript containing a summary of his work and one partly preserved garbled Slavic translation—why is it that Malalas is the subject of so much attention by you modern Byzantinists, while I would have been condemned to a full century of oblivion had it not been for one exception in 1932 and the last-minute efforts, all falling within the last decade, of three of your contemporaries: one, a scholar of wide-ranging interests, devoted an article to me in 1981—unfortunately, it appeared in the *Proceedings* of the Irish Academy, a periodical which is not available in heaven; the second republished me in 1984, I suspect more for the sake of my sources than my own; and finally, in 1985 or earlier, the third delved into what I had to say about the period preceding the flood, again, I fear, to stress my dependence on my predecessors rather than to praise my own scholarship.”¹¹

¹⁰For the Greek manuscript tradition, cf. now Mosshammer, *Georgius Syncellus, Ecloga* (as in note 11 below), viii–xxi; for Anastasius Bibliothecarius and his partial translation, cf. *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, II (Leipzig, 1885), 32 and 60–77, and C. Leonardi, “Anastasio Bibliotecario e le traduzioni dal greco nella Roma altomedievale,” in *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks: The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. M. W. Herren (London, 1988) 277–96; for Joseph J. Scaliger's use of the Parisinus graecus 1711 of Synkellos in reconstructing Eusebius' *Chronicle*, cf., e.g., the *Nachwort* to the reprint (Osnabrück, 1968) of Scaliger's *Thesaurus temporum* (Leiden, 1606), III and R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (Oxford, 1976), 113 and 118; Mosshammer, *Georgius* (as in note 11 below), v; and A. Grafton, *Forgers and Critics, Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton, 1990), 100–101. Leo Allatius, *De Georgiis . . . diatriba*, no. 23, in J. A. Fabricius-G. C. Harles, *Bibliotheca Graeca* 12 (1809), 24–30, esp. 25, remarked that sometimes Scaliger showed *meram animi contentionem* towards Synkellos. For Casaubon's notes on Synkellos, cf. Grafton, *ibid.*, 101 and 146; for the Slavic version, cf. M. Weingart, *Byzantské kroniky v literatuře církevněslovanské*, I (Bratislava, 1922), 52–54 (a lucid and still indispensable summary of Istrin), to be used together with O. V. Tvorogov, “Xronika Georgija Sinkella v Drevnej Rusi,” in *Issledovanija po drevnej i novoj literature, Festschrift* for D. S. Lixačev (Leningrad, 1987), 215–19. I thank Simon Franklin for drawing my attention to Tvorogov.

¹¹Cf. G. L. Huxley, “On the Erudition of George the Synkellos,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Section C, vol. 81, C,

Synkellos' complaints, if ever uttered, would have had some validity. Before 1981 Byzantinists generally, and even specialists in the revival of learning around the year 800, seemed not to have dealt with him very much. If I am not mistaken, the late Paul Lemerle did not mention him at all in his justly celebrated *Le premier humanisme byzantin*. Even today, Synkellos' work continues to be looked upon only as a source of information for the periods with which it deals and not for the time in which it was written.¹² To be sure, if we want to know about events around 284, the date at which Synkellos stops, we should turn, say, to Ernst Stein's *Histoire du Bas-Empire* rather than to Synkellos' chronicle, but Synkellos has something to tell us about the intellectual landscape around the year 800. Our neglect of Synkellos, I hasten to inform Aleksandr Petrovič, is not a particularly modern failing: already the Byzantines committed the same sin. Of the dozen extant manuscripts of his chronicle, several, including the two oldest ones (Wake 5 of Christ Church, Oxford, and the Vat. gr. 155, both of the late ninth century and, to my eye, by the same hand) and one of the latest (Monac. gr. 391), contain only its final part, beginning with Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem and dealing mainly with the Roman Empire. This means that even Byzantine readers considered the early—the most scholarly—part of Synkellos' work to have been of little relevance, and were interested in only the last sixth of the total. At all times, it seems, serious academic scholarship about remote periods is considered less “relevant” than writings on contemporary history.

no. 6 (1981), 207–17; *Georgius Syncellus, Ecloga Chronographica*, ed. A. A. Mosshammer (Leipzig, 1984), cf. a laudatory review by J. N. Ljubarskij in *VizVrem* 49 (1988) 231–32; W. Adler, *George Syncellus and His Predecessors: Ante-Diluvian History in the Chronicle of Syncellus and His Acknowledged Authorities*, Ph.D. diss. (University of Pennsylvania, 1982; reissued in an enlarged and improved form as *Time Immemorial*, DOS 26 [Washington, D.C., 1989]). The exception to the century of oblivion between H. Gelzer (1885) and G. L. Huxley (1981) is R. Laqueur's excellent and unjustly neglected article s.v. Synkellos in *RE*, 2.R., vol. 4 (1932), cols. 1388–1410. Cf. also the few interesting pages devoted to Synkellos by D. Serruys in *BZ* 22 (1913), 21–26, Speck, “Das geteilte Dossier” (as in note 47 below), *passim*, and John Meyendorff's entry “Synkellos” in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, XI (1988), 558.

¹²Thus Synkellos' *Chronicle* is absent from our latest compendium of sources for Byzantine history, J. Karayannopoulos and G. Weiss, *Quellenkunde zur Geschichte von Byzanz (324–1453)*, I–II (Wiesbaden, 1982).—For distinguishing a work as source of information on the period with which it dealt from the same work as source for the culture of the period during which it was written, cf. J. N. Ljubarskij in *VizVrem* 45 (1984), 75.

III

Academic scholarship of this kind, however, may survive if it finds its popularizers, and it is likely that Synkellos' (or a like-minded author's) scholarly effort found such popularizers in ninth-century Byzantium. The popularizing vehicle was the short chronicle; dozens, not to say more, of representatives of this genre survive from the later centuries, but only a few from the earlier ones. The earliest surviving redactions date from the second half of the eighth century and the first half of the ninth. The best known of these chronicles is the one attributed to Patriarch Nikephoros (in its earliest datable form, represented by London, B.M. Add. 19390, it comes from about the years 821–830 and is certainly earlier than 842)—but Nikephoros' short chronicle as reconstructed by modern scholars does not seem to be related to Synkellos' text, except for some biblical chronology. Another early text, however (preserved in the late tenth-century Vat. gr. 2210), a chronicle compiled in 854, but containing several parts and layers, including a layer completed in 818, contains material that seems to rely for its early part on a text that depended on the scholarly apparatus available to Synkellos, if not on Synkellos himself. The chronicle invokes the authority of Eusebius, Josephus Flavius, Hippolytus of Rome, and the monk Strategios. To be sure, it also has entries that go well beyond A.D. 284. These are of value, for they give us an idea of the historical horizon of a not-very-learned author writing in the early to mid-ninth century. In 1885 Heinrich Gelzer gave the chronicle short shrift: he looked at it as a potential source of truth about the remote past, and was appalled by its blunders. We shall be more sympathetic, for we shall look at the Vatican chronicle, lowly as it may appear, as a source for the intellectual history of its time.¹³

¹³Cf. H. Gelzer, *Sextus Iulius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie*, II (1885), 329–45; Gelzer used Angelo Mai's printed text, for the cardinal again neglected to identify his manuscript source. To Gelzer, the chronicle's compiler was an "inconsistent fellow," constantly blundering in his computations (p. 337); as for the chronicle itself, it belonged among the most unattractive specimens in the field of chronography (p. 320). The chronicle of the Vat. gr. 2210 was republished after Angelo Mai by A. Schoene, *Eusebii chronicorum liber prior* (Berlin, 1875), 65–102. Since the text by Schoene, who did not see the manuscript itself (cf. p. XIV), contains some errors, I consulted fols. 163r–187v. For the description of the Vaticanus, cf. now Salvatore Lilla, *Codices Vaticani graeci, codices 2162–2254* (Vatican, 1985), 184–92, esp. 187–90. The monk Strategios (fol. 165v) may be Antiochos Strategos of the report—preserved in a Georgian version—on the sack of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614. On the Vatican chronicle, cf., in addition to Lilla, e.g., Fr.

The Vatican chronicle begins by establishing its chronological framework. It starts with Adam, moves very quickly to the Babylonians, Cyrus, and Alexander of Macedon, thus adopting Greek and Jewish points of reference that were to endure for another millennium, especially in the Orthodox world; it mentions Philip Arrhidaeus, the successor to Alexander and a ruler who lent his name to an era used in astronomical computations; then it proceeds to Diocletian, another ruler eponymous of an era. It then skips to about the year 676, the seventh year of Constantine IV (unlike other early chronicles, this one correctly calls him the great-grandson of Heraclius). The year of 676, we learn, was also the year in which Stephen of Alexandria interpreted "the astronomical table" (do not wonder that a Constantinopolitan chronicle should use the name of a scholar "of Alexandria" to obtain a fixed point for its chronology; Stephen was active in the capital). Thereupon the chronicle adds 178 years to 676 and obtains 854, "the thirteenth year of the rule of Michael the Young [i.e., Michael III], his mother Theodora, and his sister Thecla," which thus is the year of its composition as a whole.

The entries that follow are the Olympiads; an entry entitled "How often and when were the Jews subjugated?"; another entry entitled "Putting it another way: on the conquests of Jerusalem" [there were twelve of them, the last one by the Persians; once liberated by Heraclius, the city remains "until now" in the power of the Hagarenes]; an entry "On seven centers that dominated the world," starting with Nineveh and ending with New Rome,

Diekamp in *BZ* 9 (1900), 15 note 1 (distinguishes various parts in the chronicle, including an excerpt from Andrew of Caesarea) and now Mango, *Nikephoros* (as in note 3 above), 4 and idem, *The Tradition* (as in note 47 below), 366–67. I shall quote one quasiliteral parallel between Synkellos and the Vatican chronicle: compare the latter's version of the story of the earthquake that occurred at the time of the Crucifixion, an earthquake that the chronicle attributed to one "Phlagon" (fols. 164 r–v = 65, ed. Schoene) with Synkellos' report of the same story, correctly attributed to Phlegon of Tralleis via Eusebius (*Chron.*, 614, 12–19, Bonn ed. = 394, 7–12, ed. Mosshammer). To explain this coincidence, it is more reasonable to assume the Vatican chronicle's dependence on Synkellos, than to think of a common source. Another 9th-century short chronicle was published from Madrid, Bibl. Nacional 4701, olim 121 (10th–11th century) by A. Bauer, *Anonymi chronographia syntomos* (Leipzig, 1909). It dates from the time of Basil I (d. 886). Cf. VII, X, XI on Synkellos himself or Synkellos' predecessors as the source of the *Anonymus*, and similar observations in idem, "Beiträge zu Eusebios und den byzantinischen Chronographen," *SbWien*, phil.-hist. Klasse, 162, 3 (Vienna, 1909), 24, 30–31, 37, 39, 41, 42, 44, 45–51 (common sources with Synkellos; one should, I believe, entertain the possibility of Anonymus' dependence on Synkellos).

that is, Constantinople, a city to which power migrated after the abolition of paganism by Constantine the Great. Finally, there is an entry about the dates of the composition of the four Gospels [that of Matthew was the earliest one]; this entry reappears in a number of early chronicles and was tentatively attributed to Hippolytos of Thebes, an author difficult to date and to localize.¹⁴

Ecclesiastical lists follow. Practically no details are given on individuals, except for synchronisms with emperors and, occasionally, with martyrs (such as Polycarp of Smyrna), heretics (such as Paul of Samosata or Arius), or councils (such as that of Nicaea). The first list gives the patriarchs of Rome from St. Peter to Paschal I, who died in 824. Next come the patriarchs of Alexandria, from St. Mark to the Melkite Peter, whose last year of rule was 651. The Alexandrian list bears traces of a previous Monophysite redaction. Third are listed the patriarchs of Antioch, starting again with St. Peter and ending with the Melkite Anastasius II, whose pontificate ended in 609. Fourth are the patriarchs of Jerusalem, beginning with James, the brother of the Lord, and ending with Modestos who is dated, not quite correctly, to 630. Sophronios is not mentioned, although it is quite likely that this last patriarch of Jerusalem before the Arab conquest was read or at least known by name in the milieu to which the compiler of the chronicle belonged. The patriarchs of Constantinople come in the very last place; their list extends from Metrophanes, dated 314, to Methodius who died in 847.

The next items in the chronicle deal with the jurisdictions of the various patriarchates, starting again with that of Rome. Rome is given a huge territory from Great Britain to the lands of the Slavs, the Avars and the "Scythians," a term that by the time of our chronicle must have meant Bulgarians. It is interesting to note what Slavic territories people in Constantinople granted to Rome shortly

before the mission of Cyril and Methodius. In the section on jurisdiction the patriarchate of Constantinople comes second, not last. Its boundaries include Sicily, Kherson, and Khazaria. Finally, the areas allotted to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem are given—I shall omit details concerning the extent of their jurisdictions.

Next the rulers of various peoples are listed, and it is here that the chronicle shows parallels to the work of Synkellos or one of his sources, Eusebius. Some of these rulers and peoples were useful for establishing connections and synchronisms with the Old Testament; others were not. The peoples in question are Chaldaeans, Arabians, Assyrians, Egyptians, but also Sicyonians, Argives, Mycenaean (ending with Orestes and Agamemnon), Athenians (whose rule ended with a certain Agmaion, that is, Alkmaion who appears as Akmaion in Malalas [72, 10, Bonn ed.] and as "Almeus" in Scaliger's *Excerpta Barbari* [300, 1, ed. Frick]; "Agmaion" died in the thirty-second year of the biblical king Manasses), Lacedemonians, Corinthians, Latins (whose rule, we learn, lasted until the fortieth year of the aforementioned Manasses, which is given as the year of the world 4827), and Romans, ending with Tarquinius Superbus—the time of the kings is considered as a separate unit in Roman history. Roman kings were followed by consuls who governed until the first year of Caesar Augustus, the ruler of the first Rome.

Next, the chronicle goes back in time and lists rulers of the Medes whose empire was taken over by the Persians, and the Macedonians whose dominance ended with Alexander the Great. In accordance with Daniel's prophecy, Alexander's empire was divided into four successor monarchies: the Macedonians; the Ptolemies (who came to an end when Cleopatra was captured by Caesar Augustus); the Asians; and the Seleucids. There follow the Lydians, ending with Croesus, from whom the Persians took over; Babylonians, subdued by the Persians; the Persians themselves, down to Darius, who was vanquished by Alexander; Jews, until the Babylonian Captivity; the Kingdom of Israel, united and divided, starting with David and ending with Hosea; Jewish archpriests followed by "kings of the Jews from among the gentiles," for instance, Herod, a contemporary of Caesar Augustus, the emperor in whose forty-second year our Lord was born. This, incidentally, is the third time that Augustus provides the final or initial date of a series. The next rubric reads "Persian kings again"; this time the chronicle means the Sasan-

¹⁴Cf. Diekamp, *Hippolytos* (as in note 5 above), liv–lv and 40. Concerning the modern survival of the Vatican chronicle's inherited points of reference, Aleksandr Petrovič will recall the opening scene of Gogol's *Inspector General* (1836 and 1841) in which the mayor speaks of the local history teacher: "He explains things with such a passion. . . . I heard him once: well, as long as he was talking about the Assyrians and the Babylonians, things were more or less all right; but when he got to Alexander of Macedon. . . . he ran down from the podium, grabbed a chair and with all his strength smashed it against the floor. Alexander of Macedon was a hero, no doubt about it, but what's the point of breaking chairs?" Was Gogol aware of the venerable ancestry of his famous passage? For the wider context, cf. A. Bauer, *Ursprung und Fortwirken der christlichen Weltchronik* (Graz, 1910), esp. 18–19 (somewhat marred by anti-Semitism).

ans, and must be relying on some Byzantine source. The Sasanian rule began with Ardashir and ended with the Saracen conquest, the latter dated to the thirteenth year of Heraclius.

The last list of the main part of our short chronicle deals with the rulers of the Saracens. It is this entry that distinguishes the chronicle from the other earliest members of the genre known to me. It starts with the year 623 and Mohammed—which is to be expected—and ends with Harun al-Rashid, that is, with the year 808 or 809. After Harun the chronicle records seven years of internecine wars, which brings us down to the year 816 or so. The Saracen list lets the anarchy among the Arabs last “until the present eleventh indiction” and ends with the prophetic statement, “In our days (νῦν) the Lord shall put an end (κόψει) to the years of their rule and shall raise the horn of the Christian empire against them.” The closest eleventh indiction after 816 falls into the year 818. The upbeat prophecy seemingly dates from the days of the hated Iconoclast, Leo V, and brings to a close one layer in the chronicle, copied mechanically by the compiler of the Vaticanus or by some predecessor of his.¹⁵

In order to come down to his own time, the compiler continued with his work. In what seems to be an appendix, he counted from Adam again, invoking Epiphanius of Cyprus as his informant. He soon arrived at Augustus and was ready for a list of emperors. There are actually two lists. The first, starting with Augustus, is that of “Pagan emperors who ruled in Rome”: the last emperor there is Maximinus (Daia? Maximianus?), though perhaps it should have been Maxentius, the foe vanquished by Constantine at the Milvian Bridge near Rome. The second lists “Christian emperors who ruled in Byzantium,” that is, Constantinople. The last of these emperors is Basil I, but his regnal years are not given; therefore we can deduce that the appendix to our chronicle was compiled between 867 and 886.

The Vatican chronicle shares two characteristics with the earliest comparable representatives of the genre. First of all, it is considerably out of date when it names prelates or rulers reigning outside

of Constantinople. Thus, the latest pope it mentions died in 824, leaving the chronicler thirty years behind his time. If we consider the fact that the chronicle’s compiler put Rome first in his system of patriarchates and recall the close contacts between eighth- and ninth-century Iconoclasts and Rome, we should find this time lag remarkable. For the patriarchs of Alexandria the chronicler is about 200 years out of date, for the patriarchs of Antioch, 250 years. He is only marginally better on the patriarchs of Jerusalem where the time lag is about 220 years. Even if we can explain some gaps by lack of interest, or willing ignorance of the names of non-Chalcedonian prelates, this, too, is remarkable. When it comes to the Arabs, on the other hand, the chronicler is comparatively up to date, only 35 years behind—the second shortest time lag among foreign entries. Reasonably enough, keeping up with the Arabs was at least as vital as keeping up with the popes of Rome.

The second characteristic that our chronicle shares with its contemporaries—indeed, with all Byzantine historiography of the period under discussion—are the gaps in its information about rulers who reigned in Constantinople. In several cases, it offers either insufficient or wrong information for relatively recent emperors, including one belonging to the Heraclian family, Heraclonas, whom it omits altogether. The chronicle attributed to Nikephoros is even worse, for it leaves out both Heraclonas and Constantine III, the short-lived two rulers between Heraclius and Constans II; the chronicles of the Vat. gr. 1291 and of London, B.M. Add. 19390 call Leontius Leo; and refer to Justinian II as Justin.¹⁶ In other words, early short chronicles lack reliable information on rulers who reigned from 100 to 200 years or so before the chronicles themselves were compiled, in striking contrast to the precision and reliability of the chronicle of Nikephoros regarding the genealogy of Valentinian the Great and Theodosius I, emperors of the fourth century, that is, more than 400 years distant from the chronicle’s compilation.¹⁷ Their information on the patriarchs of Constantinople should have been flawless—but it was not. The Vatican chronicle omits or erroneously gives the years of the respective pontificates of all the

¹⁵ Vat. gr. 2210, fol. 184r: ἀαράων [= Harun al Rashid] ὁ ἄδε(λφός) αὐτ(ο)ῦ ἔτη ἔ ἀναρχία κα(ι) πόλεμο(ς) εἰς τ(ο)ς υἱόυς αὐτῶ(ν) ἔτη ἕ μέχρη τῆς ἐνεστώσης ἱά ἐπινεμήσεως· κόψει ὁ θ(ε)ός νῦν τὰ ἔτη τῆς δυναστείας αὐτῶν· κα(ι) ὑψώσει κατ’ αὐτῶ(ν) τὸ κέρας τῆς τῶν χριστιανῶν βασι(λ)είας. The transcription of this passage in Schoene, *Eusebi chron.* (as in note 13 above), 97 is misleading in one important spot, and A. V. Gutschmid’s commentary, confusing.

¹⁶ Cf. Vat. gr. 2210, vol. 187r and *Nicephori . . . opuscula historica*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1880), 99; Vat. gr. 1291, fol. 17r; London, B.M. Add. 19390, fols. 21v–22r; Oxford, Wake 5, fol. 4r–4v. A confusion between Justinian and Justin did happen on a higher literary level as well: cf. Evagrius Scholasticus, *Hist. Eccl.*, IV:14 = 164, 2, ed. Bidez and Parmentier.

¹⁷ Cf. de Boor, *Nicephori . . . opuscula* (as in note 16), 103.

three patriarchs of the second Iconoclast period, and it misreads the name of one of them, Antonios, as Antoninos.¹⁸ Should we believe that Anthony (821–837 or 838) was only imperfectly remembered in Iconodule circles less than twenty years after his pontificate?

I know only one early catalogue that lists all the emperors between Heraclius and Justinian II. It is the one contained in the illuminated Ptolemy of the Vatican.¹⁹ That imperial list's compiler must have had access to authoritative sources: this, coupled with the manuscript's quality, may point to the court itself. If I am right in dating the Vatican Ptolemy to the late eighth century, that list of rulers would also be the earliest of all preserved. We must conclude, then, that in the first part of the ninth century it was difficult to reconstruct Byzantium's recent past.

IV

There is a great likelihood that the later part of George Synkellos' scholarly effort survives in a work much more extensive than the Vatican chronicle: I have in mind the jewel of middle Byzantine historiography, the Chronicle of Theophanes (d. 818). Cyril Mango's inquiry into who wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes is a milestone in Byzantine studies; ever since the appearance of that article, both the converts and the skeptics must ask themselves: what kind of text—or better yet, whose text—are we reading in Theophanes?²⁰ In

¹⁸Omissions and errors of the Vat. gr. 2210 are on fol. 175r. The durations of pontificates of the three heretical patriarchs of the first iconoclast period are given correctly. Even if we should assume with A. von Gutschmid (Schoene, *Eusebi chron.* 81, as in note 13 above) that the list of the patriarchs of Constantinople was originally drawn up under Nikephoros (whose years are not given) and completed after Methodius (most probably, we may surmise, under Ignatius) we must find the repression or ignorance of the recent iconoclast past remarkable. The patriarchal list in the "Nikephoros" chronicle of London, B.M. Add. 19390 ends on fol. 23v with the precise entry θεόδοτος ἔτη ε μῆνας (sic) θ' αἰρετικοίς. This last word, still in yellow ink, seems to be by a somewhat later hand, the same that added the words ἔτη ιβ after Emperor Theophilus' name. Cf. now Mango, *Nikephoros* (as in note 3 above), 3 and 23–24.

¹⁹Vat. gr. 1291, fol. 17r. I see now that the late 9th-century short chronicle of Madrid, ed. Bauer, *Anonymus* (as in note 13 above) gives the correct sequence of rulers between Heraclius and Constans II.

²⁰Cf. C. Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?" *ZRV* 18 (1978), 9–17. As samples of the initial reaction to the shock, cf. I. S. Čičurov in *VizVrem* 42 (1981), 78–87 and esp. J. N. Ljubarskij, *ibid.* 45 (1984), 72–87 (Theophanes' passages adduced by Mango, including the crucial ones 490, 3 and 440, 7, ed. de Boor, were simply declared unconvincing and a systemic analysis was carried out instead; some valid observations on Theophanes' respective handling of Procopius and Theo-

order to answer this question, we must put ourselves on the firmest possible ground and begin with the preface, for, whatever else Theophanes may have written in his chronicle, he surely wrote that.²¹ I propose that we should believe what Theophanes' preface asserts, and that we should agree on the following points:

(1) Theophanes did take some material or pointers for his work over from Synkellos—unless we interpret the unclear ἀφορμὰς παρέσχε of the preface (4, 2) as referring to a general stimulus, or even a bequest of material assistance rather than to detailed drafts and notes put at Theophanes' disposal. Incidentally, Theophanes also may have taken over some of Synkellos' prejudices—perhaps his hostility toward Emperor Nikephoros I: Theophanes tells us about an anonymous synkellos who was involved in a plot against that emperor and who became one of Nikephoros' victims.²² This was early in 808, thus at a time when our George Synkellos was still alive, even though by that time he was only a *former* patriarchal synkellos.

(2) Theophanes' style and learning were inferior to those of Synkellos. Anyone who reads Theophanes' preface right after Synkellos' introductions to his own work perceives the difference in level between the two texts. It follows that the stylistically more polished parts of Theophanes' chronicle are the best candidates for attribution to Synkellos' clean copy (it is impossible to identify the rough notes that Theophanes may have inherited from Synkellos on the grounds of style alone).

(3) Theophanes was a scissors-and-paste compiler, even if he made adjustments inside his clippings.²³ This observation is compatible with Mango's opinion that there is little or nothing by Theophanes in the chronicle that goes by his name. There exists one difficulty, however; The-

phylact Simocatta were offered, but his dependence on George of Pisidia was not given the attention it deserved, beyond the mere mention of the fact. In sum, to Ljubarskij Theophanes was not a scissors-and-paste compiler and Synkellos' and Theophanes' working techniques and self-awareness were directly opposed to each other. Laqueur (as in note 11 above), col. 1407 assumed that Theophanes was the editor of Synkellos' "Select Chronography" that remained in a draft form at the author's death. We can now say that he was on the right track.

²¹Cf. Theophanes, *Chron.*, 3, 9–4, 24, ed. de Boor.

²²Cf. Theophanes, *Chron.*, 483, 26–484, 2, ed. de Boor.

²³We can deduce Theophanes' technique from his handling of "Malalas," cf., e.g., the excellent analysis of all relevant passages in Else Rochow, "Malalas bei Theophanes," *Klio* 65, 2 (1983), 459–74. Cf. also E. and M. Jeffreys in *Studies in John Malalas*, ed. E. Jeffreys et al., (Sydney, 1990), 257–59, 268–76. Unfortunately, we do not know which version of Malalas (or of a common source?) Theophanes had in front of him.

ophanes explicitly asserts in the preface (4, 8–9) that he collected material on his own: “For we, too, searched for many books (πολλὰς γὰρ βίβλους καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐκζητήσαντες) according to our possibilities, and investigated them.” This assertion sounds plausible; if it is true, it makes Theophanes an “independent” researcher as well and weakens the maximalist interpretation of Mango’s thesis.²⁴

When we examine the materials available to Theophanes—whether he gathered them himself or inherited them from Synkellos—we find that he, too, faced the same difficulties that the compilers of ninth-century short chronicles later encountered. He had trouble finding sources for the Eastern patriarchates and for some relatively recent Byzantine reigns, especially those of Heraclius and his successors. While “Theophanes” (from now on, I shall put his name in quotation marks to avoid returning to the question of authorship of his Chronicle) had the opportunity, and the intelligence, to use, in addition to a version of Malalas or a source common with him, the high style writers Procopius and Theophylact Simocatta for recounting events down to 602 (Evagrius Scholasticus, incidentally, went the same route), for Heraclius he relied to quite an extent on poems of George of Pisidia: that on the Avar war, but especially those called “On Persian Wars” and “Heraclius.” In fact, extensive and insufficiently digested metrical passages from the third “recitation” of the latter poem have been salvaged mostly from “Theophanes” prose. To crib from a poem is not the most conventional way of gathering historical information, unless of course conventional narrative sources are not available. I surmise that Greek narrative sources for Heraclius’ eastern campaigns

were meager to start with. Any reader of the final part of the *Chronicon Paschale* can easily grasp why. The *Chronicon*’s horizon did not extend much beyond the threatened—at times besieged—capital and its environs. Once the emperor and his new bride moved to the East, they and their Persian war were out of sight. We learn about the faraway campaigns only through the few official dispatches from the Eastern front that reached the patriarchate chancery and were made public by it; and the regnal years of the *Chronicon* religiously include those of the young Heraclius–New Constantine, residing in Constantinople. The Arab conquest and both emperors’ deaths made the struggle with Sasanian Persia recede in importance and left intellectuals of the capital with less leisure and fewer sources of patronage for describing events overshadowed by the new calamity.²⁵

Much has been written about the sources that “Theophanes” used in the later part of his work. One of them was Oriental. Another he shared with Nicephorus’ *Breviarium*. Some may have been official pronouncements. Some, finally, were tracts roughly contemporary with Theophanes. These postulated tracts may have been less numerous and diverse and less neatly identifiable than has been suggested a dozen years ago, but they did exist.²⁶ They were polemical pamphlets in both low and high style and dealt with contemporary history. One of them, by Sergius the Confessor, we know only through an entry (codex 67) in the *Bibliotheca* by Photius, Sergius’ putative son. Sergius’ work went as far down as 827/8, with flashbacks to Constantine V’s time. We can form some idea of what these lost occasional historical works may have been from a summary of one of them, preserved by Theophanes Continuatus. Its author was Theognostos, a professional grammarian and specialist in orthography, and its subject, the unsuccessful uprising in Sicily by the philandering tur-

²⁴In his article (p. 16), Mango assumed that the “many books” of Theophanes’ passage amounted to perhaps not more than five or six. This is possible. Still, on the one hand, we do not know whether Synkellos himself operated with many more books; on the other, Theophanes may have had a reputable library at his disposal. In our own earlier article (DOP 27 [1973], 265–66) we adduced *De cerim.* I, 456, 13–457, 13, Bonn ed. for the story on how Leo Katakylas’ (ca. 900) rare text on the procedures to be followed during imperial military campaigns was unearthed by Constantine VII’s court researchers in the library of Theophanes’ monastery at Megas Agros. We also adduced (p. 266 note 153) two more surviving manuscripts that at some time had belonged to that monastery’s library; and noted that by the 13th century this library possessed thirty-five volumes. (On Leo Katakylas see now J. F. Haldon, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, CFHB 28 [Vienna, 1990], 180–81.) Perhaps Synkellos left Theophanes with a list of sources and passages to be excerpted, in addition to finished notes (such as 490, 3 and 440, 7, ed. de Boor) that can plausibly be attributed to his pen. There is no end to speculations.

²⁵For George of Pisidia in Theophanes, cf. *Giorgio di Pisidia, Poemi: I. Panegirici epici*, ed. A. Pertusi (Ettal, 1960), esp. 26–29; 31; 276–92. If I understand her thorough study correctly, the assessment offered here is borne out by Ann S. Proudfoot’s “The Sources of Theophanes for the Heraclian Dynasty,” *Byzantion* 44 (1975), 367–439. Theophanes’ troubles were already noticed in the brilliant, but by now half-forgotten, essay by C. Neumann, *Die Weltstellung des byzantinischen Reiches vor den Kreuzzügen* (Heidelberg, 1894; repr. Amsterdam, 1956), 16. Michael and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale, 284–628 AD* (Liverpool, 1989), xxvii are, after Gelzer, aware of the Constantinopolitan blinders worn by the *Chronicon*’s author, but do not exploit the point.

²⁶For too generous an assumption as to the number of the tracts, cf. P. Speck, *Kaiser Konstantin VI*, 1 (1978), 389–97.

march Euphemios who had himself proclaimed emperor with Arab help.²⁷ Two other pieces (in fact parts of the same whole) have come down to us—I have in mind the *Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio* and the story, discovered by Ivan Dujčev half a century ago, of the unlucky expedition of Nikephoros I against Bulgaria—a story the source of which may have been used by “Theophanes.”²⁸ Both these independently preserved fragments and the lost historical report by Theognostos covered the early years of the ninth century.

V

Though George Synkellos resided in Constantinople, it is likely that he had not been brought up and educated there, but in Palestine. At least, both his chronicle and “Theophanes” contain enough indications to suggest that at some time George had lived and worked in Palestine.²⁹ On the other

²⁷Theognostos dedicated his work “On Orthography” to Leo V and wrote the story of Euphemios soon after 826/7. Cf. Theognostos Περί ὀρθογραφίας . . . ed. K. Alpers (Hamburg, 1964) and Theophanes Continuatus, *Hist.*, 2, 27 = 81, 16–83, 11, esp. 82, 17–20, Bonn ed.

²⁸For the improved text (with an Italian translation) of *Scriptor Incertus* and the “Chronicle of the year 811,” cf. now *Scriptor Incertus*, ed. Francesca Iadevaia (Messina, 1987), with an introductory essay by Emilio Pinto. C. de Boor left a precious unpublished draft of an edition of *Scriptor Incertus*. Cf. also Karayannopoulos and Weiss, *Quellenkunde* (as in note 12 above), 342 (= nos. 206 and 207).

²⁹It was asserted that such passages as Synkellos, *Chron.*, 200, 21–201, 3, Bonn ed. = 122, 18–22, ed. Mosshammer, where the author says that he saw the tomb of Rachel on frequent occasions, when he passed it on his way to Bethlehem and the “so-called Old Lavra” of Chariton may go back to Synkellos’ sources, esp. the 3rd-century Sextus Iulius Africanus. Cf. the doubts expressed by V. Grecu, “Hat Georg Synkellos weite Reisen unternommen?,” *BSHAcrum* 28, 2 (1947), 241–45, esp. 243–44, concerning Synkellos’ extended stay in Palestine. These doubts were too easily shared. Would Africanus have written ἐκεῖσε instead of ἐκεῖ in the passage in question? Worse still, the Lavra of Chariton, a creation of the first half of the 4th century, could not have existed in Africanus’ time, let alone be called “Old” by then. It seems to have been known by this epithet already by mid-6th century (cf. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Euthymios*, chap. 19, p. 29, 27–28, ed. Schwartz, and *Vita Charitonis*, chap. 23, ed. G. Garitte in *Bulletin de l’Institut historique belge de Rome* 21 [1941], 33, 15–16, if in fact this latter Life is as early as the 6th century; it seems later to me). In all likelihood, the Lavra of Chariton got the epithet of “Old” in the early 6th century, to distinguish it from the neighboring (cf. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Kyriakos*, chap. 10, p. 228, 26–28, ed. Schwartz) *New Lavra*, founded by secessionist Origenist monks at that time. This would take us well beyond the *floruits* of Panodoros and Annianos, the other avowed sources of Synkellos. The Lavra of Chariton must have been called “Old” in Synkellos’ time; it surely bore this name at the beginning or, at the latest, toward the middle of the 9th century. This is implied by the Sirmondian Synaxary’s entries under 19 April and 26 July on the 9th-century John (or Johns) of the Lavra of Chariton, one of whom was called Παλαιολαυρῆς. Cf. *Synaxarium CP* 615, 7–616, 11;

hand, the author or authors of the Παραστάσεις σύντομοι χρονικά are certainly from Constantinople.³⁰ This being so, ironically, the most scholarly Byzantine historical work dating from around the year 800 is represented by a writer of “provincial” origins while the stylistically and conceptually lowest pseudohistorical piece roughly datable to our period comes surely from the capital. The work’s compilation date is eighth century—practically everyone agrees on this point.³¹ But when ex-

843, 23–844, 10 (Delehayé believed in one John only, cf. *ibid.*, 1028, *ad* 843, 24). Cf. “Les premiers monastères de Palestine” (unsigned, but by J. Vailhé), *Bessarione* 2, 3 (1897–98), esp. pp. 50–58, “La Laure de Souka ou la Vieille Laure (345)”; S. Vailhé, *ROC* 4 (1899), 524–25 (= no. 21); and, above all, S. Vailhé and S. Pétridès, “Saint Jean le Paléolaurite. . . ,” *ROC* 9 (1904), 333–58; 491–511, esp. pp. 491–98. (There were two Johns. The one “of the Old Lavra” of Chariton died at the beginning of the 9th century, in any case, before 845; the other, a pupil of Gregory the Decapolite, after 842.)

³⁰Text in *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. Th. Preger (Leipzig, 1901), 19–73; Preger’s text was reprinted, with an English translation and a useful commentary, in *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, ed. Av. Cameron and J. Herrin (Leiden, 1984). The main outline of my treatment of the *Parastaseis* here had been drawn before I received the latter book.

³¹“Practically,” for now we have a proposal to date the compilation of the *Parastaseis* one or two centuries later. Cf. P. Speck, “War Bronze ein knappes Metall? Die Legende von dem Stier auf dem Bus in den ‘Parastaseis’ 42,” *Hellenika* 39 (1988), 3–17. Speck’s “Arbeitshypothese” (p. 5) is as follows: the *Parastaseis* as we have it today is a bad copy, made at the time of the “Byzantine Renaissance,” that is, in the 9th or 10th centuries, of an earlier dossier. It is not clear from Speck’s argumentation whether this dossier was put together in late antiquity, in the early dark centuries, in the 7th, or in the 9th–10th centuries (cf. the contradictory statements on pp. 5, 6, 16, 17). All this (and much more) in the article is demonstrated with the touch of a consummate magician conjuring up evidence we no longer have, and leaving aside such evidence as we do possess. The evidence at hand allows us to make reasonable guesses about the collecting habits (the “encyclopedic techniques”) of the professionals active during the “Byzantine Renaissance.” As a result, we can assert that an abyss separates the *Parastaseis* from the “philological-antiquarian efforts” (p. 6) of these professionals; this is true even of the sloppiest of these efforts such as the *De administrando imperio*. Moreover, if the dossier of the *Parastaseis* dates from the early dark centuries, why does this work contain a number of references to the 8th century? And if that dossier was compiled in the 9th–10th centuries, why does it not contain any allusion to any event later than the 8th? The late 10th-century *Patria* mentioned magnates and emperors of the 9th and 10th centuries on a number of occasions. To be sure, the *Parastaseis* did come within the purview of the encyclopedists of the 10th century: the *Suda* repeatedly makes use of it, or of some form of it. For the more conventional datings of our text, cf. G. Millet in *BCH* 70 (1946), 393–402 (742–46, speculative); G. Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire*, Bibliothèque byzantine, Etudes 8 (Paris, 1984), esp. pp. 29–48 and C. Mango, *DOP* 17 (1963), 60 (mid-8th century). In their dating, too early for my taste, Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople* (as in note 30 above) title; 23, 24, 29, 53, hesitate between the early and the first half of the 8th century. They have to admit that parts of the *Parastaseis* point to the time of Constantine V, but consider these

actly was the *Parastaseis* compiled? In my view, in the last quarter of that century. The work is only moderately anti-Leo III and may even call him “pious” on one occasion (if it is not confusing Leo III with Leo I; if it is not, it must be referring to the years 740–41 when it speaks of the restoration of the capital’s western, that is, land walls); on the other hand, it contains a reference to the burning of the monk Anastasius in the Hippodrome, an event that occurred “in our time” (ἐφ’ ἡμῶν, Combeffis’s safe emendation of the sole manuscript’s εὐφημῶν). The story of Anastasius, guardedly narrated, introduces us to the world, but not to the tone, of the Life of Stephen the Younger, which describes tribulations visited upon Iconodules (also in the Hippodrome) in the 760s and later years. Of course, the author of the Life of Stephen does it most stridently, for he could easily afford it: he wrote under an Iconodule ruler in the first decade of the ninth century. The mild, and not quite consistent, disapproval of “Konon,” that is, Leo III, and the rather muted show of sympathy for the monk Anastasius, “burned” alive because he “opposed the emperor on account of his truthful ways” (δι’ ἀληθείας τρόπον ἀντιλέγων τῷ βασιλεῖ ἐκαύθη) fit well the years between 775, the death of Constantine V, and 787, the reestablishment of Orthodoxy. One further passage in the *Parastaseis* is compatible with the proposed dating. We learn that according to what was being said at the time of the writing of that passage, and according to the opinions of professional painters, a picture (στήλη ἐκ χρωμάτων) of Emperor Philippikos (711–713) was perfectly true to life. Such retrospective judgments presuppose Philippikos out of the way and could have been uttered as late as two generations after his reign. If I had to assign the compilation of the *Parastaseis* to one reign, I would opt for that of Leo IV (775–780).³²

parts to be “limited additions.” Cameron’s and Herrin’s dating is too early for A. P. Kazhdan as well, cf. *BZ* 80 (1987), 402. The somewhat indecisive dating in A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* [= Πουκίλα Βυζαντινά 8] (1988), 40–49 (p. 40: “about the very end of the 8th century”; p. 46, “between 775 and 802”) on the whole agrees with the one proposed here. Cf. also the next note for the article by O. Kresten.

³²Cf. Preger, *Scriptores*, 20, 13–14 (Leo who restored “the western walls of the great gates” should be Leo III rather than Leo I, cf. Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople* [as in note 30 above], 170); 22, 22–23 (Leo the Isaurian was foolish); 61, 7–10 (burning of monk Anastasius); 71, 1–6 (painted portrait of Philippikos [not a mosaic or painted statue, *pace* Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople*, as in note 30 above, 272]). On the date of 740–741 for the restoration of sections of the land wall of Constantinople, cf. C. Mango’s and my forthcoming *Corpus* of dated

The home of the author (or authors) of the *Parastaseis* is of course the capital, but the level of standard culture reflected in the work is embarrassingly low. It invokes the “chroniclers” Herodotus and Hippolytus; this is still acceptable. It is hardly acceptable, however, that the author (or authors) should attribute to these very men the information that Constantine the Great had beheaded his third son, for this puts Herodotus in or after the fourth century after Christ. In an inserted piece, the *Parastaseis* refers to Demosthenes and makes him predict that a famous man will be killed by a statue “in this place,” that is, in the Kynegion of Constantinople. The event referred to is a fatal accident that happened to one Himerios, presumably between 711 and 713, at the time of Emperor Philippikos. Thus Demosthenes’ prophecy came true after a thousand years.³³

Our author introduces the third-century physician and philosopher Galen; to be sure, Galen was not only a medical authority par excellence, along with Hippocrates, but also a school author, studied in literary classes of secondary schools, although we do not know whether he was used in such a way already in the eighth century. But the *Parastaseis* puts Galen in the time of Emperor Zeno, almost three hundred years after Galen’s death.³⁴

In addition to impossible chronology and fantastic information there is, I fear, straight imposture in our text. How to pin down some of the writers quoted by our author, such as one Agkyrianos, “a

Byzantine inscriptions. The dating of (at least) chap. 3 of the *Parastaseis* to the time after 775 is also proposed by O. Kresten, “Leon III. und die Landmauern von Konstantinopel. Zur Datierung von c. 3 der Παραστάσεις σύγγραφοι χρονικά,” *Römische historische Mitteilungen* 34 (1992). Kresten argues as follows: (a) the repairing of the walls by a Leo referred to in chap. 3 is to be dated to 740–741; (b) since that Leo is called μέγας, i.e., “the Elder,” there must exist or have existed a Leo “the Younger,” i.e., Leo IV (775–780), by the time of the composition of chap. 3. I am indebted to Prof. Kresten for access to the typescript of his article. Berger, *Untersuchungen* (as in note 31 above), 45 does not accept the emendation ἐφ’ ἡμῶν, but does not explain the nonsensical εὐφημῶν.

³³Cf. Preger, *Scriptores*, 24, 1–2 (Herodotus and Hippolytus; the attempt to change Herodotus into Herodian [e.g., Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople*, as in note 30 above, 42, note 115] leads nowhere); 36, 19–21 (prediction derived from Demosthenes’ writings).

³⁴Preger, *Scriptores*, 45, 10–46, 12. Galen’s works were read (or studied) along with those of fiction, of orators (who included not only Demosthenes, but also Herodotus and Procopius), grammarians, and commentators of Holy Writ and Aristotle. Cf. P. Wendland, *Alexandri in librum De sensu commentarium* (Berlin, 1901), XVI, 21–25, from cod. Hierosol. Panag. Taphou 106, fol. 7r (late 13th century). John Duffy discussed this text in a paper delivered at the 16th Byzantine Studies Conference (Baltimore, Nov. 1990).

man from Ancyra(?)” who wrote in the fourth century or later, or the chroniclers Apollinarios and Milichios, the latter writing after Constantine the Great? I suspect that they never existed—I doubt that they can be rescued as authors of genuine, but now lost, works, whose names had been misunderstood.³⁵ I came across only one sure and more or less correct reference made in the *Parastaseis* to an authentic historical source. It quotes Eusebius twice, once in connection with the statue of Christ set up in Paneas-Caesarea by the woman with the issue of blood (αἱμορροοῦσα), a statue said to have been destroyed by Julian. A part of this reference, which is also in “Theophanes” and earlier sources, is in fact to be found in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, even if the *Parastaseis* may have it secondhand. Alas, our text’s other reference to Eusebius is spurious. In it, Eusebius is made to interpret the statue set up by Constantine in the Forum as that of “some pagan.”³⁶ There are other shadowy personalities in the *Parastaseis*, such as Kanonaris the philosopher, a proponent of ancestral pagan values, beheaded by Constantine the Great, or Ligyrios the pagan astronomer, who allegedly was consul under Leo I.³⁷

The word *χρονικά* in the title of the *Parastaseis* suggests that the work was to be passed off as history. True enough, we detect in this text some notion of periodization and some awareness of a hierarchical world order. It distinguished between Pagan Roman emperors (designated as such) and Christian ones (mentioned either by name alone or by name and identifying epithets in case of homonymy; these epithets were neutral, except, of course, for clear heretics). This was a distinction which we already encountered in the chronicle of the Vat. gr. 2210. Foreign rulers were outside the pale; hence Chosroes was a “tyrant” of the Persians, even though Byzantine authors bestowed the title of basileus upon Sasanian kings. All these distinctions, however, are not firmly delineated.

Objectively, the bulk of datable information con-

tained in the *Parastaseis* comes from the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, but there is no firm conception of chronological sequence in our text. It acclaimed Constantine the Great for his military victory over Byzas and Ante (figures of the mythical past invented to explain the name of Byzantium); and the words of that acclamation were copied from a monument made in the early sixth century and still extant today. In another passage Byzas, the founder of the city, was also said to have fought against Constantine the Great in the Forum Bovis of the capital.³⁸ Functions and officials datable to the early or middle Byzantine periods (χαρτουλάριος, ταξεῖται) were taken for granted and quoted without explanation, but the *Parastaseis* showed disarming innocence about basic institutions of old: there is no other etymology of “Senate,” we are told by it, than that a man by the name of “Senate” built the Senate.³⁹ Along with such proofs of ignorance in the secular realm, the *Parastaseis* displayed reasonable familiarity with church matters and assumed it on the part of the reader as well. It quoted mere names, without epithets, of the early patriarchs of Constantinople and it showed discernment with respect to heresies. One of them (Arianism) was condemned outright (perhaps on account of the taint of Arianism attached to the Iconoclasts) while another (Monothelism) was treated with some indulgence (perhaps because Emperor Philippikos, the last monothelite, had ousted the “godless” Justinian II, the *bête noire* of the *Parastaseis*). Philippikos was described as “mild” (and thus in possession of one of the ideal imperial virtues); he “erred,” to be sure, but he did it “on account of ignorance.”⁴⁰ In sum, when we examine the *Parastaseis* for its conception of history, especially secular history, we end up wondering whether our text’s creators were conscious of such a thing. But the *Parastaseis* was interested in history as a task: it had “Galen” assert that two statues of Gorgons standing in Constantinople were writing histories of emperors.⁴¹

Who wrote the *Parastaseis* and for what public was it written? Its anachronisms, its bizarre errors,

³⁵ Cf. Preger, *Scriptores*, 25, 20–26, 2 (Agkyrianos; the answer to the question “A Quotation from S. Nilus of Ancyra in an Iconodule Tract?” asked by Alan Cameron in *JTS*, n.s. 27 [1976], 128–31, is “no”); 66, 4–5 (Apollinarios and Milichios).

³⁶ Statue in Paneas: Preger, *Scriptores*, 53, 11–22 (ultimate source: Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* VII:18:2, but cf. Theophanes, *Chron.*, 49, 9–19, ed. de Boor [with sources] and sources quoted in Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople* [as in note 30 above], 237). Constantine’s statue: Preger, *Scriptores*, 65, 18–66, 3.

³⁷ Cf. Preger, *Scriptores*, 55, 19–56, 5 (Kanonaris); 22, 6 and 64, 11–12 (Ligyrios). Cameron and Herrin grant the fictitiousness of Milichios, Kanonaris, and Ligyrios, cf. *Constantinople*, 42, 175, 241.

³⁸ Cf. Preger, *Scriptores*, 23, 7 (Chosroes a tyrant of the Persians); 42, 2–6 (Constantine’s victory over Byzas and Ante; quotation from Porphyrios the charioteer’s monument); 54, 19–20 (battle in the Forum Bovis).

³⁹ Preger, *Scriptores*, 31, 12–13 (ταξεῖται); 49, 15–17 (Senate).

⁴⁰ Preger, *Scriptores*, esp. 25, 17–20 (misdeeds of the Arians); 71, 2–3 (Philippikos).

⁴¹ Preger, *Scriptores*, 45, 10–15. Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople* (as in note 28 above), 223 believe that the Galen of the passage was a (real) wise man in the time of Zeno.

its false dative constructions, and its anacoluths point at first sight to a humble social milieu as the home of the writers and readers of that curious work. But this first impression is not quite correct. A clue does exist to help define the social space of the *Parastaseis*, even if this clue is hidden not in the text proper, but in a short story inserted into it.⁴² In that story, the narrator's friend Himerios, the unlucky man killed by a statue (we remember that Demosthenes had predicted his tragic end) bears the title of "honorable chartoularios." This takes us into the stratum of imperial bureaucracy; but we must investigate further, for chartoularios is a term denoting officials of diverging social standing. Was Himerios a lower-to-middle-echelon functionary, occupying a subordinate post in the officium of a logothete in the capital or of a strategos in the provinces and holding the rank of a spatharios or a strator? Or was he an eminent dignitary with the rank of a patrikios, in charge of the imperial stables, the state treasury, or the arsenal of the imperial navy?⁴³ The evidence speaks in favor of Himerios' having been a chartoularios of the latter kind, a man who enjoyed access to the emperor himself. The only chartoularios surely attested for the eighth century was Paul, a trusted follower of Leo III whom that emperor promoted to the rank of patrikios and dispatched as his general to quell a rebellion in Sicily.⁴⁴ Consider, furthermore, the narrator's assertion that the friends of the emperor, that is, of Philippikos Bardanes, came to visit the very place of Himerios' demise. These friends would naturally be affected by the death of a man of their own milieu, but would hardly be interested in a subordinate chartoularios' fate.

But what about the narrator? In social terms, he presents himself as standing close to Himerios whom we just defined as a high dignitary. He could afford contradicting Himerios' wrong antiquarian

views. Like Himerios, he arrived at the Kynegion on a mule, and like him had a servant (or servants) to take care of the animal. Afraid of being accused of having murdered Himerios, he obtained asylum in the Great Church, a privilege not open to everyone. What goes for the narrator, goes even more for the "philosopher" John, who apparently was a member of the party that visited the site of Himerios' death, for in spite of his popular nickname of "philosopher," John had access to the emperor.

Thus the story of Himerios, for all its unsophisticated flavor, is not a sample of popular literature, if by this adjective we mean something belonging to the lower layers of society. Mystification or not, and unless the narrator was vastly improving his social standing or pulling our leg, this story reflects the world of the high or middle echelons of the capital's bureaucracy. I therefore guess that the compiler or compilers of the *Parastaseis* as a whole were familiar with the middle—perhaps even upper—level bureaucrats, of whom I imagine "Philokalos," the (pseudonymous?) addressee of the inserted piece about Himerios, to have been one.

The language of the *Parastaseis* does not contradict this assessment. For all its howlers, this language does not reflect the "popular" speech, no matter whether we mean by this the speech of the illiterate, of people lacking formal training, or even the speech consistently falling below the norm of the Byzantine "usual" prose. The fact is that in one case at least the language of the *Parastaseis* rises above the level of that prose. In chapter eighty-five, the compiler of our text explained the name of Ikonion—"Arriveville"—by the fact that Perseus had "arrived" there (ἐκ τοῦ ἤκειν τὸν Περσεῖα ἐκλήθη Ἰκόνιον). He thus assumed that the reader would take ἤκειν to be the usual verb meaning "to arrive."⁴⁵ Now, precisely this verb ἤκειν was considered as worthy of annotation by the glossator of the Mon. gr. 366, a collection of premetaphrastic Lives of the saints (some of them in high style), a manuscript carefully produced about the

⁴²Text in Preger, *Scriptores*, 35–36 = §§ 27 and 28. Cf. also *ibid.*, II, 162–63 = § 24, and *Suda*, ed. A. Adler, III, 213, s.v. κυνήγιον. On the story of Himerios, cf. also C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *DOP* 17 (1963), 60–61; Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire* (as in note 31 above), 32–33 (translation of the passage; according to Dagron, Himerios was a fictitious person) and Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople* (as in note 30 above), *ad loc.*

⁴³Cf. R. Guillard, "Contribution à l'histoire administrative de l'empire byzantin: Le chartulaire et le grand chartulaire," *RESEE* 9 (1971), 405–26; N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles* (Paris, 1972), index s.v. χαρτουλάριος (various entries); F. Winkelmann, *Byzantinische Rang- und Ämterstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert . . .*, BBA 53 (Berlin, 1985), index, s.v. Chartularios, esp. p. 48.

⁴⁴Theophanes, *Chron.*, 398, 12–399, 4, ed. de Boor.

⁴⁵In a brilliant piece of his youth, Mango, "Antique Statuary" (as in note 42 above), 60 assumed that the *Parastaseis* represented the attitudes of the common man. *Contra*, Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople* (as in note 30 above), 13–15, 32 and note 80 rightly stress the relatively elevated social level of the milieu that produced and read the *Parastaseis* (authors give a sense of belonging to an exclusive club, they were government officials of some literary pretensions) and note that some parts of the work attempt high style. Cameron and Herrin are too optimistic on the latter point, however. Throughout Byzantium's existence, nearly every writer attempted high style, openly or in secret. But the attempt of the author or team of the *Parastaseis* is a particularly miserable failure.

year 900 or somewhat earlier. There, this verb is glossed ten times by such equivalents as ἐλθεῖν, παραγενέσθαι, καταλαβεῖν, or ἔρχεσθαι. Apparently the glossator, who worked for literate monks of a rich monastery in the capital, believed that they would not be comfortable with the verb ἦκειν while reading the Lives in the Monacensis.⁴⁶

If the foregoing observations have any merit, we may guess that the producers and readers of the *Parastaseis* enjoyed comfortable social standing. We are further entitled to guess that the *Parastaseis* reveals an urge to make sense of the past on the part of the lay—and perhaps some clerical—members of the Constantinopolitan literate society some years before 800. These people differed from their contemporaries like Tarasios, Nikephoros, or George Synkellos not so much because of their social status, or because they were mostly laymen while the others were ecclesiastics (patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros had begun their careers as lay bureaucrats), as because they did not have the same formal literary training and culture as Nikephoros and his equals had. I would like to believe that the impulse to deal with the past came from the better educated to the less educated members of the elite, and that the *Parastaseis* implies the existence of people like Nikephoros and Synkellos.

VI

Historical writing around the year 800 shares some traits with the work of other periods: thus, literary production existed on various levels of style that roughly reflected the respective levels of culture (but not always of social standing) of the authors; the period produced conventional works—what modern theoreticians of scientific change call “normal” science. The chronicles of Nikephoros and “Theophanes” and perhaps occasional historical writings, such as the lost story of the Sicilian uprising by Theognostos—presumably written in high style—or less sophisticated reports with a polemical tinge, such as the *Scriptor Incertus*,

are relevant examples. Along with these “normal” products, however, our period saw the appearance of two less usual works—the technical scholarly effort by Synkellos, and the *Parastaseis*. The first was undertaken on a scale unparalleled in Byzantium proper either before or after 800—an esoteric effort, to be sure, but one that may have been reflected in parts of one or two early short chronicles. The second, the *Parastaseis*, was an attempt by some author or authors to decipher the silent or cryptic message of the city’s monuments among which they passed every day. These people were not very literate, but stood, ironically enough, relatively high on the social scale and were within earshot of people of high culture, or at least of high power.

Synkellos, Nikephoros, and the author of the *Parastaseis* make an unlikely trio when it comes to culture, but each of them in his own way points to a time of an interest for the past—difficult as this past may have been to reconstruct—and of an intellectual activity which was growing in intensity as time went on. Before professional philologists and *littérateurs* came to the fore, we find that all kinds of people took part in this activity—among them educated and less educated ecclesiastics, a bureaucrat or two, and a grammarian, but all of them were doubling as historians. Thus the search for the past stands at the beginnings of the first Byzantine humanism.⁴⁷

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⁴⁶ Preger, *Scriptores*, 72, 8–9; cf. also *ibidem*, 72, 4–5 (ἐκλήθη οὖν Ἰκόνιον . . . διὰ τὸ ἡμένοι τὸν Περσέα. Forms of ἦκω occur ten times in the *Parastaseis* (true, nine of these occurrences are crowded into three pages [[70–73] of Preger’s Teubner text). Malalas, *Chron.*, 36, 18–20, Bonn ed. (and texts related to him) give a different etymology of Ikonion (from εἰκόνα). For the glosses, cf. Monac. gr. 366, fols. 8rb, 9ra, 48rb (twice), 52ra, 95ra, 146va, 219rb, 229vb, 239ra.

⁴⁷ In the past few years, Mango and Speck have published a number of historiographical studies that deal with the topic of the present essay and discuss in detail some sources mentioned in it. Some of these studies are crisp and illuminating, some controversial. The reader of the present offering will profit from consulting all of them. Cf. (a) Cyril Mango, “The *Breviarium* of the Patriarch Nikephoros,” in *Byzance: Hommage à A. N. Stratos*, II (Athens, 1986), 539–52; “The Tradition of Byzantine Chronography,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12–13 (1988–89), 360–72; and *Nikephoros* (as in note 3 above); (b) Paul Speck, “Weitere Überlegungen und Untersuchungen über die Ursprünge der byzantinischen Renaissance,” *Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά* 6, Varia II (1987), esp. 255–75; “Das geteilte Dossier,” esp. “Das geteilte Dossier oder Möglichkeiten und Tendenzen byzantinischer Historiographie vor 800,” *Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά* 9 (1988), 499–519 (of interest for Synkellos and for the paucity of sources for recent Byzantine history available in Constantinople ca. 800). Treadgold’s *The Byzantine Revival* (as in note 3 above) is valuable, but its author is interested more in the revival of state and society than of culture; see, however, 51–58; 373–80 (on culture); 387–90 (on sources).